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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

THE END OF THE "THIRTY YEARS' WAR"

In December, 1887, when the editor of the Foreign Department had been only one year out of her training school, and had as yet no more grasp on foreign affairs than has a young rabbit, a group of English matrons met at the home of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who had just recently married after a short, but brilliant nursing career at the head of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and its school for nurses. Already British nursing leaders had realized the need of standardizing nursing education and protecting it by state recognition. At the meeting in Mrs. Fenwick's home, they organized for that purpose, and thereafter carried on a desperate struggle which was only brought to a close on June 27, 1919, in the following way.

We have told in this Department, how the fortunate ballot for "first place" on the calendar of new bills, fell to Major Barnett, who brought in the Nurses' Registration Act in the present Parliament, and how the College of Nursing bent all its energies to defeating the bill and bringing in its own, and how a sort of deadlock ensued.

On the twenty-seventh of June, when the Act was up for debate, "wrecking tactics," well known in every legislature, were resorted to, with the result that the newest Cabinet member, the Minister of Health, Dr. Addison, rose in the House of Commons and gave, on behalf of the Government, the following promise:

I will undertake, at the earliest possible time, on behalf of the Government, to introduce a measure, providing for the Registration of Nurses * * * You may take that as a bona-fide pledge.

The old war-horses are satisfied that this will mean a complete and crowning victory for trained nurses in their long struggle with the tory and commercial interests that have been arrayed against them. A Government measure cannot so easily be wrecked, and with the resources of the administration put behind it, a Registration Act will go through. Dr. Addison also made some very plain comments on the untenable position of the College of Nursing, in trying to be, as it were, teacher, examiner, and business controller all in one.

One of the most prominent Matrons on the opposition made a speech not long ago in which she expressed great "forebodings." That is the true tory spirit, always forebodings; never faith, and belief in the rank and file; great forebodings, doubts and fears that the world will move.